

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MONTRE 01093 01 OF 02 052112Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 JUSE-00 FTC-01 AID-05 CIAE-00  
COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15  
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R 051850Z JUL 77

FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9172  
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
AMCONSUL TORONTO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTREAL 1093

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA, ECON

SUBJ: QUEBEC MISSION REPORTS ON MULTINATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICIES

BEGIN SUMMARY: MISSION SPONSORED BY QUEBEC GOVERNMENT TO STUDY  
USE OF LANGUAGES BY MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN EUROPE  
HAS CONCLUDED THAT LINGUISTIC QUESTIONS ARE RESOLVED ON  
BASIS OF PRAGMATISM. INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS ARE IN  
ENGLISH, INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS IN LANGUAGE OF MAJORITY,  
AND COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN LANGUAGE OF CUSTOMER.  
STUDY CONTAINS CONCLUSIONS SUPPORTING BOTH POSITIONS IN  
QUEBEC LANGUAGE DISPUTE AS IT AFFECTS BUSINESS OPERATIONS.  
IN RECOGNIZING IMPORTANCE OF OPENMINDEDNESS AND USE OF  
INCENTIVES RATHER THAN LEGISLATION, STUDY SUPPORTS OBJECTIONS  
OF MONTREAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO BILL 1. AT SAME TIME,  
OBSERVATIONS THAT INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS ARE ALWAYS IN LANGUAGE  
OF MAJORITY RESPONDS TO DEMANDS OF DR. LAURIN THAT USE OF  
FRENCH IN HEAD OFFICES BE INCREASED. EMPHASIS IN ANGLOPHONE  
AND FRANCOPHONE PRESS, AS WELL AS REACTION OF BUSINESS AND GOVERN-  
MENT OFFICIALS, HAS REFLECTED THIS DIFFERENCE IN VANTAGE POINTS.  
IN CONCLUSION, STUDY WARNS THAT ONLY SURE WAY OF INCREASING USE  
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PAGE 02 MONTRE 01093 01 OF 02 052112Z

OF FRENCH WITHIN HEAD OFFICES IS TO CREATE INFRASTRUCTURE OF  
COMPETENT FUTURE EXECUTIVES WHO ARE FRANCOPHONE, BUT WHO MUST  
ALSO HAVE SOUND WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING TABLING OF BILL ONE, QUEBEC PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
SENT STUDY TEAM, COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS,  
ACADEMIA, AND GOVERNMENT TO EUROPE TO STUDY LANGUAGE POLICIES OF

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS. MAIN MESSAGE OF REPORT, SEEMS TO BE THAT ATTITUDE OF MULTINATIONALS REGARDING LANGUAGE QUESTIONS IS ALWAYS BASED ON PRAGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS, NEVER ON LEGISLATION, AND SELDOM ON FORMAL OR SYSTEMATIC POLICIES.

2. AGAINST THIS GENERAL BACKGROUND, MISSION FOUND THAT ENGLISH IS LANGUAGE MOST OFTEN USED IN FIRMS' INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES, WHETHER IN COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, SCIENTIFIC, OR TECHNICAL FIELDS. USE OF ENGLISH, REPORT STATED, IS INTENSIVE AND GROWING AND IS MORE OR LESS INDEPENDENT OF LANGUAGE ORIGIN OF THE FIRMS. MISSION FOUND SPREAD OF ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE ACROSS EUROPE AND REST OF WORLD STRIKING.

3. MAIN EXCEPTION IN USE OF ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION WAS FOUND IN FRANCE, WHERE TEAM FOUND THE STRONGEST DESIRE TO MAINTAIN NATIONAL LANGUAGE AS THE LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS. THUS, FRENCH FIRMS OFTEN USED FRENCH TO COMMUNICATE WITH SUBSIDIARIES ABROAD. EVEN IN FRANCE, THOUGH, USE OF ENGLISH WAS INCREASING FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION. ONE OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF REPORT WAS THAT FOR HEAD OFFICE CAREERS, ONE HAD TO BE AT LEAST BILINGUAL AND ALMOST ALWAYS KNOW ENGLISH.

4. WITH REGARD TO LANGUAGE WITHIN HEAD OFFICES, AS OPPOSED TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, MISSION FOUND THAT LANGUAGE MOST FREQUENTLY USED FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WAS LANGUAGE OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 MONTRE 01093 01 OF 02 052112Z

MAJORITY OF REGION, WHICH IN ALL CASES OBSERVED WAS THE LANGUAGE OF MANAGEMENT. OTHER OFFICIAL LANGUAGES WERE ALSO USED, HOWEVER, IN HEAD OFFICE AND ENGLISH COULD ALWAYS BE USED. WHAT MISSION FOUND SURPRISING WAS THAT RULE OF USE OF LANGUAGE OF MAJORITY IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS HELD EVEN IN CASE OF SMALL LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES. AS EXAMPLE, SWISS-GERMAN, A REGIONAL DIALECT, WAS MAIN SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN HEAD OFFICE OPERATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISES LOCATED IN GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND.

5. IN SUMMING UP FINDINGS, STUDY CONCLUDED THAT:  
-- SMOOTH OPERATIONS OF A HEAD OFFICE ARE LINKED DIRECTLY WITH AN OPEN-MINDEDNESS ON USE OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGES;  
-- IT SEEMS MORE APPROPRIATE TO MAKE USE OF INCENTIVES RATHER THAN COERCION TO INFLUENCE LINGUISTIC ATTITUDES OF HEAD OFFICES;  
-- THERE IS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USE OF LANGUAGE FOR INTERNAL OPERATIONS IN HEAD OFFICE AND PRESENCE IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF TOP LEVEL EXECUTIVES WHO HAVE THAT LANGUAGE AS MOTHER TONGUE;  
-- ANY POLICY TO BROADEN USE OF LANGUAGE IN HEAD OFFICE MUST THEREFORE REST INITIALLY ON CREATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE OF COMPETENT FUTURE EXECUTIVES OF THAT LANGUAGE;

-- TO PROMOTE ACCESSION OF A PARTICULAR LINGUISTIC GROUP TO  
DECISION-MAKING LEVEL IN HEAD OFFICES, IT IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE  
THAT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH SOUND WORKING  
KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH.

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PAGE 01 MONTRE 01093 02 OF 02 052116Z  
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FTC-01 JUSE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00  
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 MONTREAL 1093

6. COMMENT: FINDINGS OF THE MISSION CAN BE USED TO SUPPORT CON-  
TENTIONS OF BOTH BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND BACKERS OF DR. LAURIN'S  
MORE RIGID PROVISIONS IN BILL ONE. IN PLACING EMPHASIS ON PRAG-  
MATISM WITH REGARD TO LINGUISTIC QUESTIONS, ON IMPORTANCE OF  
ENGLISH IN INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS, AND ON ENGLISH AS NECESSARY  
LANGUAGE FOR ANY HEAD OFFICE EXECUTIVE, STUDY SUPPORTS TO LARGE  
EXTENT POSITIONS TAKEN BY HEAD OFFICE SPOKESMEN IN MONTREAL. ON  
OTHER HAND, FINDING THAT INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, AS WELL AS  
LANGUAGE OF MANAGEMENT, ARE IN LANGUAGE OF MAJORITY, RESPONDS  
DIRECTLY TO FRANCOPHONES COMPLAINT THAT MONTREAL BUSINESS  
ESTABLISHMENT DOES NOT REFLECT QUEBEC'S CULTURE.

7. LATTER COMPLAINT POINTS TO MAIN ANOMALY IN QUEBEC SITUATION  
IN THAT LANGUAGE OF MANAGEMENT IN MONTREAL HEAD OFFICES IS NOT  
LANGUAGE OF MAJORITY. THIS IS DUE LARGELY TO HISTORICAL REASONS  
IN WHICH MONTREAL CORPORATE SETTING WAS OCCUPIED BY BASICALLY  
ANGLOPHONE FIRMS, STAFFED BY ANGLOPHONES. IF INTERNAL HEAD OFFICE  
COMMUNICATIONS ARE TO BE IN FRENCH, REPORT CORRECTLY POINTS OUT,  
WE BELIEVE, THAT ONLY WAY TO REDRESS SITUATION IS TO DEVELOP  
MANAGEMENT CADRE WHOSE MOTHER TONGUE IF LANGUAGE OF MAJORITY.  
RECENT STUDIES INDICATE THAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THIS DIREC-  
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PAGE 02 MONTRE 01093 02 OF 02 052116Z

TION. STUDY OF MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE REPORTS THAT 59 O/O OF MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN MONTREAL-AREA FIRMS ARE NOW HELD BY FRANCOPHONES, COMPARED WITH 37 O/O TEN YEARS AGO. FURTHERMORE, ANGLOPHONE BUSINESSMEN ARE NOW SHOWING MARKEDLY INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE FRENCH REALITY, AND NECESSSITY OF EXPANDING USE OF FRENCH IN BUSINESS. NEVERTHELESS, UNIQUENESS OF MONTREAL SITUATION AND DEGREE OF ANGLOPHONE BALLAST IN MANY OF MONTREAL'S LARGER FIRMS SUGGEST THAT IT MAY BE SOME TIME BEFORE FRENCH BECOMES NORMAL LANGUAGE IN MULTINATIONAL EXECUTIVE SUITES HERE.  
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## Message Attributes

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